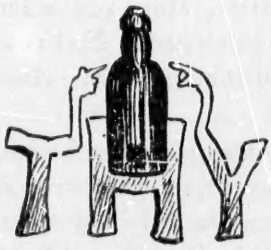


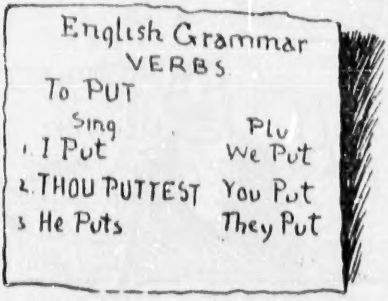
THY BOTTLE

FROM A SPEECH BY JOHN G. WOOLEY.

Illustrated by J. W. Bengough,

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also."—HAB. II, 15.

This text is a double star in a constellation of curses. It is a royal text for Christian citizenship touching "the drink." The first clause reads "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink;"—to that we all say Amen! But wait—read on; "that puttest thy bottle to him." What about "thy bottle?" That is what it says—not a bottle, nor his bottle, but "thy" bottle. You say, "Certainly, any bottle, no matter whose—the woe is in the putting." But wait, I think you will see it makes a frightful difference. Whose bottle?



Notice the verb "puttest." Verbs must agree with their substantives in person and number. If the woe were only to "him" the other man, the dramseller,—the verb would be "putteth." On the other hand, if the woe were only for the owner—the "they" of the text, "him" would not have been put for the subject of the sentence—yet it is; but "puttest" agrees with "thou." The curse is joint and several, to cover him who puts the bottle to his neighbor's lips, and HIS SILENT PARTNER who has a right by property

or authority in the bottle. Have YOU a bottle? Is there a bottle in your sideboard? No! you thunder, your house is not a drinking place. Answer! but wait—

Here is a saloon, gilded, glazed, embossed, polished and fairly phosphorescent, in your eyes and mine, with hell-light. WHOSE IS IT? Let us enter and inquire? You hesitate? Come in. "Let the drink alone and it will not hurt you," they say. It did not work so with my mother. She let it alone, but it whipped the last years of her life into one great wave of pain. My wife was an exception, too. She never touched it, but in the very flush and pride of her young womanhood, it crushed her to the very dust with everlasting heartaches. Whose is this saloon? We ask a bartender. He looks us over shrewdly—fine judges of human nature, these men—knows at a glance that we mean mischief, and his eyes wander without a word to the framed certificate on the wall. It

is a diploma from the government showing John Smith to have been graduated from the College of Restriction, and expressly authorizing him, for that reason, to put the bottle to his neighbor's lips.

So it seems John Smith conducts the place. He actually, or by his agents, "puts the bottle." But why is this license so carefully provided? Why, do you not see? It is the theory of

our wise Government, that the only right to put the bottle to a citizen's lips inheres in the sovereignty, and the Province has delegated its alcoholic sovereignty derived from the people to John Smith, for without such leave of the people to do this thing, John Smith would be plain John Smith, and of no more consequence than a clergyman or a merchant of honest wares. He is knighted, as it were—Sir John Smith, dram-seller to their sovereign majesties, the people. Are you in that? I want you to remember that a saloon is as national and as lawful as a public school. I seem to see upon the face or the rags of every drunken man a legend like you often see on packages of whiskey or tobacco.

"Take notice, the manufacturer of this article has complied with all the requirements of the law, according to the Statute in such case made and provided."

Now in this gross sum that men call sovereignty, what are you? A digit or a dot? You'll say—a digit, by the grace of God, and a Christian man. Amen! but wait—

Suppose you are remotely in this thing. What of it? Listen. If by your consent—express or tacit—your taxes are diminished by the shame-gold of license laws, I say that in the sight of God there's blood on every dollar you own.

I am talking to men who acknowledge the binding authority of the Bible, and especially such as feel constrained to do temperance work. If you have a bottle anywhere, don't try to help intemperate men; the hand that holds the bottle cannot lift helpfully on fallen men; the heart **that consents to a bottle cannot feel helpfully for fallen men.**

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to me. "What we need is a great revival of religion," but I tell you there will never be a great revival in this country, till Christian men repent in sackcloth and ashes, for their part in the liquor traffic under license laws.

Break the public bottle? You can't? You've never, never tried. You have tried to keep it corked on Sundays and election days. You have tried to keep it from drunkards, and boys, and Indians—but the drunkard was drunk yesterday, is drunk to-day, and will be drunk to-morrow, and for every drunkard that drops down, a boy starts in to fill the gap. How do you break the people's bottle? You vote to break it. The ballot is the freeman's little blast set in the rock of error, honeycombing it by slow and often imperceptible degrees. But if it seems hopeless? What is your duty? Simply to wash your hands of the saloon.

Four words answer all arguments. "We must be politic," says one. Not with MY bottle! "They will have it." Not from MY bottle! "It will be sold on the sly." Not from MY bottle. I am not bound to abolish the saloon, but only my interest in it. I'll vote my fraction of the Plebiscite right, and I'll carry my share of it for Prohibition. I am not bound to be successful, but I am bound to be true. A square man is never wrong side up. "My vote won't count." Listen, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted." The drink curse may go on piling up woe in this country, but

"Not from my bottle."

Issued by the Dominion Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic